

WAVE I E ?



Toward A Socialist Saskatchewan In An Independent Socialist Canada

More and more people of Saskatchewan are discovering the empty fraud that has been worked on them in the name of liberal capitalism—to see it as the cause of continuing poverty and human exploitation throughout the province. More and more people are recognizing that a socialist Saskatchewan and a socialist Canada is the only answer to the problems which confront them at every turn.

It is a carefully cultivated myth that monopoly capitalism has given way to the “welfare state”, to an affluent, regulated, “just” society. This sham can no longer disguise the anguish and despair of farmers being forced off their land, small towns withering, cities decaying, workers being laid off, and our resources being pillaged. Yet prices keep rising; with a smile they encourage us to go into debt; profits continue to climb; worst of all we are expected to solve the problems alone. This is not new. It is the familiar story of private greed which lies beneath the tinselled promise of “affluence for all”.

In an earlier depression, the people of Canada rebelled against the cruelty of a profit-seeking society and they formed the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation. Is anything less required today? Have the ills been remedied? Have the capitalist political parties reformed? The question is absurd. At every turn, the old-line parties have sought to erode and destroy—to make “efficient”—the principles introduced by the CCF/NDP in health, education, labour laws, public ownership, and many more.

Only a New Democratic Party intent on ending the greed and exploitation of the capitalist system can offer the people of Saskatchewan a way off the eternal treadmill of boom and bust.

This statement is devoted to rekindle that purpose in the NDP. The people who support it are members of the NDP and, through the normal means established by the Party, seek to change its policy. The changes we seek are not arbitrary or entirely new. We believe the NDP must return to its basic socialist philosophy.

Present conditions indicate that the party's founders were more prophetic than idealistic—that the NDP's drift to the center of Canadian politics has created a socialist party without a soul. The party has become obsessed with parliamentary elections and procedures, and has regrettably abandoned its base in the communities. It is becoming a party of politicians rather than people.

We recognize that socialism can not be won and secured in Saskatchewan alone. To check the powerful corporate strength that reaches out from the U.S. will require the united effort of whole nations. The movement for an Independent Socialist Canada must be nation-wide, and this was recognized by those who supported the now-famous Watkins Manifesto at the 1969 national convention. This document attempts to put those principles in relation to the conditions of Saskatchewan.

We who intend a socialist NDP cannot hide behind the excuse that we are prevented by the federal system from undertaking radical change. There is no doubt that federalism can be a hindrance. But it has been and can again be flexible enough to accommodate innovation demanded by the people. A socialist NDP must adopt an aggressive attitude of innovation on behalf of the people of Saskatchewan to show all Canadians why socialism is necessary for the entire country. Failure to act from fear of an unsympathetic Supreme Court is surely worse than to be defeated by Ottawa in our attempt to solve the fundamental ills of Saskatchewan.

At the heart of our purposes as a Party is the conviction that ordinary people must achieve and retain control over their own lives. Only a socialist program for the NDP can give that conviction meaning in our time.

Toward Humane Planning

The CCF/NDP has always advocated planning and development of resources for the benefit of the people. But planning in Saskatchewan from 1944 to 1963 was largely based on a capitalist



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theory of growth. Though this was not the intent, roads, power, communications, welfare, health and education were developed in a way that strengthened the private profit system. Clearly, ordinary people benefited from the improvements. Yet much of our wealth and our own services have since been sacrificed to corporate interests located mainly outside Saskatchewan and outside Canada. This is capitalist planning, planning for the few.

As a result of the limited version of planning in the past, when the capitalist party came to power it could blatantly exploit the wealth of the province, using laws and agencies created by the CCF.

A socialist program of planning must be based on people gaining control over the productive and natural wealth surplus of Saskatchewan.

In the short run we must establish a Comprehensive Planning and Growth Agency. It will map the sources and nature of the surplus wealth of the province; regulate social and economic development in the private and public sectors; and carry out comprehensive plans for the growth of the province. Clearly these functions must be governed by popular control and directed by certain guidelines:

a) First, political principles must guide the development of resources, reducing U.S. and other foreign control and extending public ownership of natural resources.

b) Civil servants involved in planning must not only be competent but also committed to public control and planning.

c) The agency must also evaluate what is unacceptable or dangerous private investment, taking into account ecological benefit, social usefulness and economic need.

d) Industrial development should be directly related to the "natural" economic character of the province. For example, service industries for food producing and resource exploitation will be developed. Similarly, our educational institutions should provide training and research devoted to these industries.

e) Pollution, slums and poverty are natural by-products of capitalist planning. The eradication of such waste and misery requires not only "legislation with teeth", but people's control over industrial practices and civic projects. If we cannot pass on a decent place to future generations, the concept of planning is a hollow failure.

f) In the short run, the goal of self-sufficiency should be foremost. Self-sufficiency implies more rational development of resources, production and investment so as to reduce dependence on federal grants. It means diversification of the provincial economy so as to reduce the impact of the monopoly-controlled world price system on extractive industries.

g) Comprehensive planning means we must strive to integrate all investment, expansion, contraction and transfer plans in the province. As an example, urban planning, industrial development, school curriculum planning, and resource planning can no longer be regarded as separate activities. Each influences and depends on the others, and must be seen on the whole.

h) Genuine involvement of people at the local level in planning and administering economic growth is a central guideline

to be observed by the NDP. The methods for such direct involvement must be sought before a socialist NDP comes to power, must be intimate to all phases of planning of our party in power, and must be staunchly defended and nurtured when we are out of power.

The instruments of planning and resource policy must be taken up by the people affected, in discussion with party leaders and staff, but some methods of planning that will promote socialist objectives can be suggested:

1) Increased reliance should be placed on royalty-in-kind for resource development rather than direct taxation or monetary royalties. This would give the government a marketable resource, and lead to public ownership of natural resources.

2) A marketing agency should be created to assist and direct private initiative for all important natural resources extracted in the province.

3) Expropriation should be used to achieve goals set by the people when they are frustrated by the activities of corporate power.



This Bread We Break

Capitalist economists and apologists for "agribusiness" tell us the major problem in agriculture is inefficiency. This is nothing but justification for corporate domination and the destruction of human communities.

The issue is not a standard of efficiency, but efficiency for whom: the farmers? Or those who profit by his labour: elevator companies, machinery manufacturers, food processors, and distributors and bankers?

In agriculture, as with all provincial resources, we propose rational planning to create decentralized farming communities for the health and well-being of all. First of all, the rural community must be revitalized. Local towns and villages depend on farm families and serve them. It is the healthy inter-relation of these elements which results in a real community, and it is in their mutual interest to see it preserved. A second major objective is democratic control by the farm community over all facets of food production. This means that just as farmers make the primary decisions on farming operations, workers in agricultural services or food processing industries should make primary decisions in their areas of work.

In order to meet these objectives a socialist NDP would:

1) STABILIZE FARM INCOMES. It is madness for farmers to compete among themselves in the market place—the basis of the present system. We would establish community responsibility for marketing of all farm produce. Under such an arrangement farm income would be determined on an industry-wide basis according to need and the productive potential of land. Farmers or farm communities who used their land to its fullest potential would receive fullest remuneration. Those who marketed inferior products would receive less, but all would have an income—

regardless of market conditions, or damage due to natural causes.

2) HALT CORPORATE FARMING. The invasion of corporations into farming can be stopped immediately by prohibiting ownership by non-family commercial corporations or residents of foreign countries. Such land presently owned should be expropriated and returned to private producers or co-operatives.

3) CREATE A CROWN LAND ASSEMBLY. Because of the magnitude of debt in the form of loans, mortgages, taxes and equipment financing, the private ownership of farm land under the capitalist system is a myth. At least with public ownership, the farmer and his family will be able to remain on the land rather than be "centralized" into urban ghettos and unemployment.

A socialist NDP would consider a program of land tenure which places maximum limits on single holdings. There will be a long program of crown land assembly by providing the crown with an option to buy land from retiring farmers at productive value, and purchasing land from farmers who wish to free their capital for actual production costs. These farmers would have automatic lease rights to continue farming their land. Similarly, a man selling his land to the crown could let the farm lease go to his heirs if he so wished. Crown payment for land, in turn, might take the form of guaranteed pensions for retiring farmers, government bonds or cash.

Public ownership of land will cut production costs and reduce personal debt. It will also enable farming to be rationalized through co-operatives and diversified farms.

4) RATIONALIZE BEYOND THE FARM. A socialist NDP would establish public ownership over the food industry to eliminate the inflated profits and wasteful duplication which exploit producers and consumers alike. Food will be processed and marketed (where possible) in the region of production.

The problem of agribusiness, the agricultural supply industry, can be similarly resolved by public ownership and control. Price fixing, duplication and inflated profits will be eliminated.

5) ESTABLISH A PROVINCIAL MARKETING AND SELLING AGENCY. In conjunction with a new federal trading policy this agency would arrange reciprocal trading agreements with countries which need Canadian farm produce and which have export goods that can be marketed in Canada, establish long term credit policies and increase food aid to underdeveloped areas.

The State Serves?

The NDP must restore the principle that government exists to serve the people. Gradually (and more obviously under Liberal rule) the agencies of government have come to dominate us. Unwittingly, we have created a ruling elite that frustrates and confuses ordinary people. The bureaucratic invasion of people's rights by social agencies and offensive control over people's lives must be stopped.

Above all, a socialist NDP is committed to the ideal of decisions being made at local levels on such state services as health, education and welfare. When people can govern their own services, costs will decrease and the quality of service will rise. In services and professions that enjoy semi-official status such as the legal profession, teaching, and health services, the community must have a direct voice in the licensing and certification processes.

WELFARE SERVICE under capitalist rule is nothing more than expediency designed to hide the suffering of people and to ease the conscience of the exploiters. In fact, it **INCREASES** suffering by its process of utter demoralization, and can have no place in a socialist society.

GOOD HEALTH is a human right, not a marketable commodity. Our party can settle for nothing less than universal fulfillment of that right. Health can no longer be administered on a cheque-book philosophy. Medicare must be expanded to include all forms of related health services. Emphasis must be put on preventive medicine administered through community-controlled health facilities, with government assistance to ensure equity of service from region to region. The present "fee-for-service" must be replaced by salary and capitation payment of doctors. The monopoly of the medical profession over licensing of physicians must give way to community involvement in licensing.

ADEQUATE HOUSING for all people can be achieved by a socialist NDP. The profit system is responsible for the present condition of scarcity, ugliness and waste, and can only be overcome if the **COMMUNITY** is involved in planning and organizing its housing. A socialist NDP recognizes the corruption of current urban land practices, and will bring under government ownership all urban land, beginning with that now unoccupied, relying on city-assessed prices. Such a step will break the power of land

speculators, builders, and real estate parasites who obstruct planning and rational growth. A socialist program requires a massive increase in public housing with management of such units under co-operative control by the occupants.

AN INCOME which allows anyone to develop his life fully is possible under the leadership of a socialist NDP. A negative income tax can be used even at the provincial level to realize this principle.

EDUCATION perpetuates the social class system by using public resources to provide education for children of upper-income families. By stifling social criticism it both destroys the creativity of students and assures passive obedience to capitalist rule. Its values are the values of capitalism: competition, obedience, passivity and individualism. Yet it is still true that the key point to break into the cycle of commercial indoctrination is in the schools.

The Saskatchewan educational system is stifled by central control. Bureaucratic regimentation has become a destructive barricade to creative learning. Yet there must be planning in education as elsewhere in the affairs of the province. This must not mean planning for sameness and conformity, but planning for diversity and community initiative—with students, faculty and the local community having a real voice in all affairs of schooling. School boards, in reality, have ceased to perform an independent and creative function for the local community and now work on behalf of the government, perpetuating its standards of mediocrity and false economy.

Nor has the University fulfilled its promise of benefit to the province. No amount of self-serving publicity will make the institution valuable to those who pay for it. Too much of its research is for corporate interests, too little for the community needs of Saskatchewan. Too much of its curriculum is designed to train young people for jobs elsewhere, too little to fit them for continuing service to Saskatchewan. And access to the University still favors the wealthy over the poor.

To restore the progressive potential of the educational system a socialist NDP must:

1) Reduce the size and present functions of the Department of Education, providing service and finances to local community-controlled bodies that would include parents, teachers and students. School grants to communities should be based on need with the intent of equalizing the cost of education over the province.

2) Eliminate post-secondary tuition fees and provide stipends for all students beyond the age of family dependence.

3) Build and strengthen democratic control at all levels of education.

4) Compensate working people, Indian and Metis, the poor and women for the failure of post-secondary schools in the past to respond to their needs by, for example:

- providing privileged admissions policies for children of poor and particularly Indian and Metis families;
- providing stipends and free day-care for student mothers;
- providing programs and research facilities on a priority basis to working people and their organizations, and all oppressed minorities.



WHERE DO THE PEOPLE GO?

People's Struggles For Justice And Equality

To build socialism, we must erect practical economic and social structures that put power in the hands of the people and buttress them for continuing use. Otherwise the authoritarian, top-down bureaucracy will merely replace the authoritarian corporation. Our party must champion the struggles of disadvantaged groups who seek social justice and greater control over their own lives.

LABOUR Throughout its history, the labouring classes of this region have suffered extreme exploitation at the hands of foreign-based capital. Wage slavery and poor working conditions in the mines, mills and railways of Western Canada caused labour to organize and take militant action.

In the midst of yet another depression, these conditions prevail again. Anti-labour legislation has been enacted which denies working people their basic rights: the right to organize without fear, the right to bargain, and the right to strike in support of their demands. The NDP can no longer afford the notion that it is a neutral arbitrator in labour-management relations.

A socialist NDP government must be a partisan supporter of the worker and farmer majority. We will not only recognize their basic rights, but will acknowledge and support new rights for workers: for example, the right to benefit from technological change in industry without threat to income or security, the right to control the product of his labour through democratic management of industry, and the right to 100% employment with shorter hours and higher pay.

Our party must protect and support the workers' aims. Specifically this means:

1) Enactment of a new Trade Union Act guaranteeing freedom to organize without employer interference.

2) Repeal of Bill 2, extension of the right to strike during the life of the contract when new circumstances arise not settled by negotiation, and legislation enabling workers to bargain over traditional "management rights".

3) Legislation requiring notice by employers of changes in plant operations which threaten jobs. The implementation and effects of all such changes should be subject to negotiation, including the right to re-training.

4) The minimum wage must be established in consultation with workers' organizations and applied regardless of age, sex or geographical location of work place.

5) Legislation that establishes the principle of equal pay for equal work, the right to lodge complaint by any person, and establishment of exclusive enforcement responsibility for such legislation in the Department of Labour.

WOMEN Women are once again forcing us to recognize that they still occupy second class status in the capitalist system. Our society is permeated by misconceptions about what men and women should be and do. These notions perpetuate the inferior position of women. On the one hand woman is used by profiteers who exploit her as a sexual object in advertising. In such a capacity she appears a diminished, degraded person. On the other hand women play an increasingly important part in the labour force. But here she is least often organized in unions and usually discriminated against in pay, promotion, and application of the laws in general.

Work performed by a woman in the home is not recognized or regarded as productive labour but is seen as secondary to wage-earning employment. Working women typically find themselves doing two jobs — as housewives and as cogs in the labour force. Those who seek to better their employment opportunities by going to technical schools and university are often counselled against going further or are channelled into traditional "women's" occupations, such as teaching or nursing.

Within the NDP itself women have too often been expected to perform the "kitchen" tasks, secretarial functions and to play subservient parts in the decision-making work of the Party. As equals and socialists we can no longer tolerate such arrogance and discrimination in our own ranks.

While the struggle against the oppression of women must be led by women themselves, a socialist NDP must support these efforts concretely by eliminating sexual discrimination in all aspects of society, recognizing the productive labour done in the home with a living wage, enacting laws to provide free birth control and abortion, providing comprehensive and progressive child care service on a priority basis for working mothers.

INDIAN AND METIS The most desperate struggle of all in Canada is that of the Indian and Metis for survival. Racism here has created a colony within a colony. The native people of this continent have had to face two levels of exploitation: one, at the hands of a distant imperial power, and the other at the hands of an overwhelming white society which seized the wealth of their lands and threatened the defeated victims with cultural annihilation. Capitalism has brought them chronic unemployment and inhuman living conditions.

So demoralizing has the combined force of capitalism and racism been for the Indian and Metis, and so debilitating have been the welfare, assistance and education programs initiated by public and private agencies that no reform of those programs presently contemplated will change the condition of Indian and Metis people. Real changes for Indians and Metis will only come through their control over their own lives and resources. The cumbersome and costly Indian Affairs Department hinders this objective and must be abandoned. Indian and Metis people will fashion their own movement and design their own solutions for the problems which only they can truly solve.

A socialist NDP can help by attacking the central cause of those problems: our racist, capitalist system. A beginning would require elimination of all false and prejudicial teaching about Indians and Metis. Financial assistance can be offered for their own efforts to establish their identity and their place in history. In the market place it would mean elimination of job discrimination, discriminatory consumer practices and housing practices, and providing genuinely fair and equal access to all of the social amenities to which lip service is so freely paid.

A socialist NDP government will bargain without prior conditions with the Indian community and the Metis community to reach just settlement of their proposals and demands. The survival of the native peoples of Canada demands a socialist society which understands and values difference, and a socialist movement in Saskatchewan requires the involvement and leadership of the native people.

Keep The Faith

Our party stands at the crossroad in Saskatchewan. The relentless work of capitalism is changing and corrupting the province and the people. Many have been crushed; more dispersed; all are confused and manipulated.

It is an easy and beguiling choice for the NDP to proceed down the road of liberal capitalism, reforming this or that, paying lip service to freedom and equality, basking in the warm self-righteousness of clean government and past achievement. But as we have seen, the results can be hollow.

The tangled path toward a socialist and genuinely humanistic society is hard. There are no easy maps, no experts to tell us how it can be done. The path cannot be trod without conflict and anguish, but the rewards will make the difficulties worthwhile. Hard as this path is, the NDP must keep to it—or lose the workers and farmers and teachers and all who helped build the unique history of our province.

The issues we face today are issues of survival. We must again make our party a socialist movement—a people's instrument in their struggle against liberal capitalism and all it protects: commercialism, racism, chauvinism, imperialism.

The battles and problems we face cannot be fully dealt with by the socialist movement of one province. But we do believe that we can again light the spark and lead the way in Saskatchewan. By building our movement here, we build the national movement. By succeeding here, we give hope and inspiration to our brothers and sisters across the country.

The seventies will be a decade of decision for Saskatchewan and Canada. We can become a colony of the U.S. or we can create an independent socialist society, with our party dedicated to serving the people. Compromises are no longer possible. A program of change toward socialism will not come easily. Nothing in our history has. The decision must be made now.

This statement has been prepared and circulated by the Saskatchewan Waffle Group of the NDP for discussion among party members and supporters.

It is not policy of the New Democratic Party.

We hope that it may stimulate debate and convince a majority of the party membership to embrace it.